

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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RELEASE INFORMATION

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in Sunday's *Star-Ledger*. Other newspapers may also use this information in their Sunday editions. Electronic media may release after 5:00 P.M. Saturday, October 3, 1992. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*."

THE MOOD OF THE NEW JERSEY ELECTORATE — IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

As New Jersey voters think about who to vote for on November 3, their feelings about the current economic and political situation in the country will help to guide their decisions. An indicator of the mood of the electorate is that 8-in-10 registered voters say things in the country are "off on the wrong track" and about 8-in-10 say that they are disappointed, frustrated, and angry about government and politics. About two-thirds of voters feel it's time for a change from the 12 year Republican control of the White House.

In addition, many voters in the state are experiencing difficult economic times. Four-in-ten report that their family's financial situation over the last year have gotten worse, and about 4-in-10 employed voters are concerned that they might lose their jobs in the next year.

A *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll conducted by telephone between September 9 and 15, 1992 with 669 registered voters, underscores the discontent voters in the state feel about politics.

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

There is a clear consensus among New Jersey's registered voters that the country needs to try something new. While 81 percent feel that things in the country have "pretty

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seriously gotten off on the wrong track," only 16 percent view the country as "going in the right direction." Voters who say they currently support Bill Clinton (90%) are more likely to have a pessimistic view of the country than those who support George Bush (67%).

Given a choice between the President and the Arkansas Governor, Bill Clinton is selected by 50 percent of the state's voters as the candidate who is "best able to move the nation in the right direction over the next four years" compared to 34 percent who choose George Bush. Democrats (85%) are more likely to select Clinton as the candidate who can change the direction of the country than Republicans are to select Bush (72%). However, independent voters are more equally divided with 37 percent selecting Bush and 45 percent naming Clinton.

Overall, while 67 percent say it is "time for a change," 27 percent of New Jersey voters report they are "pretty satisfied" with the way things have been run for the last twelve years with the Republicans in the White House. Clinton supporters (94%) are almost unanimous in saying that it is "time for a change." In comparison, 33 percent of those who say they will vote for George Bush say it is "time for a change" and 61 percent feel that they are "pretty satisfied." Democrats (93%) are more likely to say that it's "time for a change" than independents (67%) or Republicans (32%). About half of those who voted for Ronald Reagan in 1984 (52%) and half who voted for George Bush in 1988 (52%) say that it is "time for a change."

In their assessment of whether change should occur in the White House or in the Congress, 52 percent of the voters agree that "Republicans have controlled the presidency long enough, it's time to vote in a Democrat"; while somewhat fewer voters — 42 percent — agree that "Democrats have controlled Congress long enough, it's time to vote in the Republicans."

"The presidential election is taking place at a time when there is a strong undercurrent of voter discontent with politics and concern about the economy," commented Janice Ballou, Director of the Poll. "In this type of volatile climate, New Jersey voters will be looking for a candidate who they feel will bring about change."

THE POLITICAL CLIMATE

Discontent with politics and government is underscored in voters' opinions about seven different statements. Ninety-four percent of the voters agree "strongly" (78%) or "mildly" (16%) that "many political candidates make promises that they do not keep."

In addition, voters describe themselves as disappointed, frustrated, and angry. While 85 percent agree that "many people I know are so disappointed with politics that they don't get involved anymore," only 15 percent disagree. Eighty-four percent agree that "the political situation in the country makes me feel frustrated" compared to 16 percent who disagree, and 78 percent agree that "I often get angry about actions government takes," while 20 percent disagree. Overall, voters who support Bill Clinton are more likely than Bush voters to say that they are frustrated and angry.

In addition, while 29 percent of New Jersey voters agree that "the government does a good job of representing people like me," 67 percent disagree. Those who support Clinton (74%) are more likely to feel government doesn't represent them than those who say they will vote for Bush (58%).

Voters are somewhat more positive about the messages they are getting in the presidential campaign. Fifty-nine percent agree that "the candidates in this presidential campaign are addressing the issues and concerns most important to me" compared to 37 percent who disagree.

The state's voters are divided on the influence they feel they have on government. About equal percentages of the voters agree (54%) and disagree (46%) that "people like me don't have a voice in government."

THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE

There are clear indicators of why the state's voters are focusing on economic issues in the presidential election. About 4-in-10 employed voters report that they are "very" (23%) or "somewhat" (15%) concerned that they might become unemployed within the next year. In addition, 27 percent of the voters say that there was an adult in their household who was looking for a job in the past twelve months. Among those who looked for a job, half found a job, but half did not. Employed New Jersey voters who say that they will vote for Clinton (46%) are more likely than Bush supporters (28%) to say they are "very" or "somewhat" concerned about losing their jobs in the next year.

Four-in-ten New Jersey voters feel that their family's financial situation has gotten worse in the last year compared to 10 percent who say things are better and 48 percent who report no change in their economic condition. While about half of the Clinton voters report a decline in their family's financial situation, 28 percent of the Bush supporters say that they have had this experience.

Overall, 67 percent of the voters report that they are "very" (20%) or "somewhat" (47%) satisfied with their current standard of living compared to 33 percent who are "very" (12%) or "somewhat" (21%) dissatisfied. New Jerseyans who report that they will vote for Clinton (41%) are

twice as likely as Bush voters (20%) to say that they are dissatisfied with their current standard of living.

Voters are more optimistic than pessimistic about their families future financial situation. While 30 percent think they will be "better off" a year from now, 11 percent say they will be "worse off," and 53 percent expect things to be "about the same." Clinton supporters (14%) are more likely than Bush voters (5%) to describe expectations for their financial future as "worse."

Overall, 40 percent feel that their financial situation is more likely to improve if Bill Clinton is elected compared to 28 percent who say George Bush, and 32 percent who did not select either candidate (23%) or don't have an opinion (9%).

BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP39-4 (EP89-4), SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1992

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton* Poll was conducted between September 9 and 15, 1992, when a random sample of 800 New Jerseyans, 18 years and older, was interviewed by telephone. This sampling yielded a total of 669 respondents who reported being registered to vote. The figures in this release are based on this sample size and are subject to a sampling error of about ± 4 percent. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from that population. Sampling error does not take into account other possible sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The questions and figures referred to in this release are presented below. The location of each question on the actual questionnaire is in brackets.

"As you probably know, the Republicans have been in the White House for the last 12 years. Have you been pretty satisfied with the way things have been run, or do you think it's time for a change?" [Q.49]

	<u>Pretty Satisfied</u>	<u>Time For A Change</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Depends/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992						
--Registered Voters	27%	67%	1%	4%	99%	(663)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	7	93	--	--	100	(202)
--Independent	26	67	1	6	100	(278)
--Republican	58	32	5	5	100	(172)
<u>Race</u>						
--white	31	63	2	4	100	(549)
--non-white	9	89	1	1	100	(99)
<u>Vote Choice</u>						
--Clinton	4	94	--	1	99	(340)
--Bush	61	33	3	4	101	(267)
<u>Vote 1984</u>						
--Reagan	41	52	2	4	99	(344)
--Mondale	4	91	1	4	100	(208)
<u>Vote 1988</u>						
--Bush	40	52	3	4	99	(374)
--Dukakis	4	94	--	2	100	(192)

"Generally speaking, would you say things in the country are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?" [Q.52]

	<u>Right Direction</u>	<u>Wrong Track</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992					
--Registered Voters	16%	81%	3%	100%	(663)
<i>Party ID</i>					
--Democrat	8	88	4	100	(202)
--Independent	13	86	1	100	(278)
--Republican	32	64	4	100	(172)
<i>Vote Choice</i>					
--Clinton	8	90	2	100	(340)
--Bush	29	67	3	99	(267)

"Which of the candidates for President will be best able to move the nation in the right direction over the next 4 years -- Republican, George Bush, or Democrat, Bill Clinton?" [Q.53]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>No Difference</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992						
--Registered Voters	34%	50%	7%	9%	100%	(663)
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	4	85	3	7	99	(202)
--Independent	37	45	9	9	100	(278)
--Republican	72	13	8	7	100	(172)
<i>Vote Choice</i>						
--Clinton	1	92	3	4	100	(340)
--Bush	82	3	6	9	100	(267)

"People have lots of different opinions about our government. I am going to read you a series of statements. For each one, please tell me whether you agree or disagree. First, how about (START AT DESIGNATED POINT) -- Do you agree or disagree? (PROBE: Do you strongly or mildly (agree/disagree)?" [Q.54]

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Many political candidates make <u>promises that they do not keep.</u>							
September, 1992							
--Registered Voters	78%	16%	3%	2%	1%	100%	(663)
Many people I know are so disappointed with politics that <u>they don't get involved anymore.</u>							
September, 1992							
--Registered Voters	67	18	6	9	1	101	(663)
<i>Vote Choice</i>							
--Clinton	73	13	5	8	1	100	(340)
--Bush	59	26	6	8	1	100	(267)

[Q.54 Continued]

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Agree</u>	<u>Mildly Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>The political situation in the country makes me feel frustrated.</u>							
September, 1992							
--Registered Voters	65%	19%	11%	5%	1%	101%	(663)
<u>Vote Choice</u>							
--Clinton	71	17	9	3	--	100	(340)
--Bush	53	24	15	8	--	100	(267)
<u>I often get angry about actions government takes.</u>							
September, 1992							
--Registered Voters	52	26	15	5	2	100	(663)
<u>Vote Choice</u>							
--Clinton	62	24	9	5	1	101	(340)
--Bush	38	30	23	7	2	100	(267)
<u>People like me don't have a voice in government.</u>							
September, 1992							
--Registered Voters	39	15	20	26	--	100	(663)
<u>Vote Choice</u>							
--Clinton	44	12	20	24	--	100	(340)
--Bush	32	16	22	30	--	100	(267)
<u>The candidates in this presidential campaign are addressing the issues and concerns most important to me.</u>							
September, 1992							
--Registered Voters	27	32	19	18	4	100	(663)
<u>The government does a good job of representing people like me.</u>							
September, 1992							
--Registered Voters	10	19	24	43	4	100	(663)
<u>Vote Choice</u>							
--Clinton	9	15	23	51	2	100	(340)
--Bush	11	27	25	33	4	100	(267)

[Q.54 Continued]

The Republicans have controlled the presidency long enough, it's time to vote in a Democrat.

September, 1992

--Registered Voters 40% 12% 14% 30% 5% 101% (663)

The Democrats have controlled Congress long enough, it's time to vote in the Republicans.

September, 1992

--Registered Voters 27 15 22 31 5 100 (663)

"Overall, how satisfied are you with your current standard of living--very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?" [Q.57]

	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992							
--Registered Voters	20%	47%	21%	12%	--	100%	(669)
<u>Vote Choice</u>							
--Clinton	17	42	23	18	--	100	(340)
--Bush	26	54	16	4	--	100	(267)

"Thinking about your family's financial situation over the last year, have things gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same?" [Q.58]

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992						
--Registered Voters	10%	41%	48%	--	99%	(669)
<u>Vote Choice</u>						
--Clinton	9	49	41	--	99	(340)
--Bush	14	28	58	--	100	(267)

"And, looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you and your family will be better off financially, worse off, or about the same as now?" [Q.59]

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992						
--Registered Voters	30%	11%	53%	6%	100%	(669)
<u>Vote Choice</u>						
--Clinton	29	14	52	5	100	(340)
--Bush	34	5	55	6	100	(267)

"Do you think your financial situation is more likely to improve if Republican George Bush is elected or if Democrat Bill Clinton is elected?" [Q.60]

	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Either</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992						
--Registered Voters	28%	40%	23%	9%	100%	(669)
<u>Vote Choice</u>						
--Clinton	2	73	21	4	100	(340)
--Bush	67	3	17	12	99	(267)

ASKED OF THOSE WHO ARE EMPLOYED:

"And, how concerned are you that you might become unemployed within the next year? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not too concerned about becoming unemployed?" [Q.XD7a]

	<u>Very Concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u>	<u>Not Too Concerned</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992					
--Registered Voters	23%	15%	62%	100%	(439)
<u>Vote Choice</u>					
--Clinton	28	18	54	100	(219)
--Bush	14	14	72	100	(180)

"In the last 12 months, has any adult in your household been out of work and actively looking for a job?" [Q.XD11a]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992				
--Registered Voters	27%	73%	100%	(669)
<u>Vote Choice</u>				
--Clinton	29	71	100	(340)
--Bush	23	77	100	(267)

ASKED OF THOSE LOOKING FOR WORK:

"Did that person find a job or not?" [Q.XD11b]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
September, 1992				
--Registered Voters	49%	51%	100%	(174)
<u>Vote Choice</u>				
--Clinton	43	57	100	(100)
--Bush	63	37	100	(57)